

NHP-2/23/01
VLR-12/6/00

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Blenheim (VDHR # 151-5003)
Other names/site number: Willcoxon (Willcoxon, Wilcoxon, Wilcoxon) Place

2. Location

Street & Number: 3610 Old Lee Highway ☒ Not for Publication
City or town: City of Fairfax ☐ Vicinity
State: Virginia Code: VA County: Fairfax (Independent City) Code: 600 Zip Code: 22030

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

H. Alexander Wise, Jr. 12/29/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
☐ entered in the National Register. Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
☐ () see continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register _____
☐ () see continuation sheet
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register _____
☐ removed from the National Register _____
☐ other, (explain:) _____

Blenheim

Name of Property

City of Fairfax, Virginia

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> Structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> Total
Name of related multiple property listing		Number of contributing	
N/A		Resources previously	
		listed in the National	
		Register <u>0</u>	

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories
from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter
categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt/Composition Shingles

other: _____

Narrative Description

Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets

☒ See continuation sheet

Blenheim
Name of Property

City of Fairfax, Virginia
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark x in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark x in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☒ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

MILITARY

Period of Significance

ca.1860-1865

Significant Dates

1861-1865

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Blenheim
Name of Property

City of Fairfax, Virginia
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9. Major Bibliographic References

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of
individual listing (36 CFR 67)

☐ previously listed in the NR

☐ previously determined eligible
by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic
Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American
Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American
Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of add. data:

☒ State SHPO office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Twelve Acres

UTM References: USGS Map Scale 1:24 000

1 /18/ /301180/ /4303220/
Zone

2 /18/ /301020/ /4303420/

3 /18/ /301100/ /4303350/

4 /18/ /301010/ /4303130/

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Blenheim estate, located at 3610 Old Lee Highway, is bounded on the south by Old Lee Highway, and on the north, west, and east by modern housing subdivisions. The tax parcel is #57-2-02-190 as recorded in the most recent deed of conveyance (Book 10756, Folio 1404, dated January 22, 1999).

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The Blenheim estate is comprised of twelve acres from what was once a large farm complex known as Willcoxon Place at the northeastern outskirts of downtown Fairfax. The property includes the main dwelling known as Blenheim, a small shed, the family cemetery and additional land to the rear of the main house. The property is located within the locally designated Blenheim Historical District (established June 23, 1998).

☐ See continuation sheet

Blenheim
Name of Property

City of Fairfax, Virginia
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Laura H. Hughes, Laura V. Trieschmann and Simone M. Moffett, Architectural Historians
Andrea J. Loewenwarter, Patricia A. Gallagher, C.K. Gailey and Suzannah Foster, Local Historians
Organization E.H.T. Traceries Inc. Date June, 2000
Street & Number 1121 Fifth Street Telephone (202) 393-1199
City or Town Washington State DC Zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Fairfax
street & number 10455 Armstrong Street telephone (703) 385-7931
city or town Fairfax state VA zip code 21218-2690

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of the Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Blenheim, City of Fairfax, Virginia

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SITE DESCRIPTION

Blenheim is located on the north side of Old Lee Highway in the northeast section of the City of Fairfax. Built ca. 1860, Blenheim was the primary residence for the Willcoxon family. Originally encompassing over one thousand acres, only twelve acres of the Willcoxon farm remains associated with Blenheim. The existing, twelve acre property is bordered on the south by Old Lee Highway and modern housing developments to the north, east and west. The land developed with modern housing to the north, east and west was historically part of the larger holdings of the Willcoxon family. Three acres of the remaining twelve acres of land are located directly around the house and the remaining nine acres are obscured by extensive vegetation. A family cemetery is located to the southeast of the house and a number of unmarked graves are located to the north of the cemetery. Through the 1950s, the outbuildings on the property included a large barn, silo, pump house, corncrib chicken house, and a number of other supportive outbuildings. Now joined to form a single structure, only the pump house and machinery shed remain, set directly to the north of the house. A modern cistern/well is located directly in front of the shed.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Willcoxon Place, now known as Blenheim, is a ca. 1860, two-and-a-half story, brick house designed in the Greek Revival style. The massed-plan house faces south toward the road and its outbuildings were located to the north, behind the house. The brick foundation is laid in six-course American bond and pairs of brick chimneys are located at each end of the side-gable roof. The original section of the house is five bays wide with a ca. 1945 entry porch at the center bay of the south elevation. A ca. 1950 one-story kitchen wing with a ca. 1975 one-story addition has subsequently been added at the east elevation.ⁱ

The brickwork found at Blenheim is unusual in that the continuous use of multiple courses at all four elevations was not a common practice in the mid-19th century. Specifically, the use of seven-, eight- and nine- course American bond in mid 19th -century was not a commonly used brick laying technique. The lack of consistency and sophistication in the bonding suggests that the masons could have been inexpensive, inexperienced, or unskilled. The brick foundation is laid in six-course American bond. The brickwork of the facade (south elevation) is laid in six-, seven-, eight- and nine-course American bond. The rear (north) elevation brickwork is laid in six-, seven- and eight- course American bond. The

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brickwork on the east elevation has been disturbed by the 20th century addition. The brickwork is laid in

seven- and eight- course American bond, but the header courses have been constructed or repaired with stretcher bricks in a number of areas. The west elevation brickwork is laid in five- and seven- course American bond. The introduction of stretcher bricks at some of the header courses found at the east elevation is repeated on the west elevation.

The facade (south elevation) of the original section of the house is five bays wide and faces toward the landscaped front yard. A ca.1945 entry porch is located at the center bay of the elevation. This modern flat-roofed porch has two square posts and is approached from the front yard by a small brick stair. It replaced a one-story full-width porch with a half-hipped roof. Ghosting from the original porch is evident at the base of the second-story windows. The original entry has a six-light transom with four-light sidelights and a single paneled door. The 6/6 double-hung, wood sash windows have louvered shutters and delicate jack arches forming the window lintels. A corbelled brick cornice extends across the front and the rear of the building. The original standing seam metal roof, viewed in historic photographs, has been replaced with modern composite shingles. The caps of the paired brick chimneys located at the side gables of the main block have been rebuilt.

The east elevation of the main block has a single 6/6 double-hung, wood sash window with a flat arch and metal hood over the lower sash at the attic level. The brickwork has been discolored and damaged in a number of areas at the second-story level of this elevation. A majority of the east elevation has been obscured by the modern additions.

The north elevation of the original house continues the symmetrical layout found at the south elevation with the doorway located at the center bay. The two-step stair leading to the back door has a metal handrail that is also found at the side entrance. The windows are 6/6 double-hung, wood sash with jack arches. The brickwork at the far east bay has been discolored between the first and second-story windows. Ghosting, beginning two courses below the second-story window, extends diagonally across to the top of the first-story window.

The west elevation has a mid-20th century window opening at the second-story and an original window opening with a 6/6 double-hung, wood sash window at the attic level. The original window at the attic level has a flat arch, where the window at the second-story does not have a decorative lintel, only a brick sill.

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The first addition, constructed at the east elevation of the main block, is a ca. 1950 one-story, two-bay wide kitchen wing. The south elevation of the kitchen wing is obscured by extensive vegetation. A second, one-story, two-bay wide, ca. 1975 addition was constructed at the east elevation of the kitchen wing. The kitchen wing and its addition have a side-gable roof with wood siding in the gable end. The stepped flashing of the wing ends five courses below the second-story window of the main house. The brick is laid in six-course American bond and the modern windows have brick sills. An entrance to the basement is located at the east elevation of the kitchen wing. An opening at the base of the south elevation of the addition has been altered by the introduction of concrete blocks. A brick and stone four-step stair provides access to the side entrance at the east elevation of the addition. The north elevation of the kitchen wing and addition is two-bay wide at each section with an air conditioner unit located at the second bay of the addition.

Outbuilding

The outbuilding located directly behind the house was constructed during three different building campaigns, and encompasses various uses including shed, pump house, and machine shed. The earliest section of the building is a late 19th-century one-story shed with a front gable roof and wood siding. The door is situated at the south side of the east elevation and a small six-light wood window is located at the north end. The roof is constructed of metal sheets and the building's foundation is parged. Its south elevation has a single window opening with a six-light wooden awning window. A turn-of-the-20th-century addition with a shed roof is located to the north of the shed with a single door and wood siding. A 1950 insurance map lists this addition as a pump house. The second addition to the late 19th century shed includes the machinery shed and workshop, built during the second quarter of the 20th century. This addition extends from the west elevation of the shed and is constructed of concrete blocks and vertical wood siding. The side gable roof is sided with composition shingles and two wood beams support the roof at the south elevation. A modern cistern/well is located directly in front of the shed. The nonhistoric structure is circular in form and construction of concrete blocks with a wood frame cover.

The family cemetery, occupying a 52.5 by 35 feet area, is located to the southeast of the main dwelling. This small cemetery consists of approximately fifteen graves. Although some of the interments are now obscured by vegetation, at least thirteen are marked with headstones facing to the east. The markers are placed in rows, although a consistent plan was not distinguishable. Constructed of granite and marble, the markers vary in form set on stone bases. Types include the upright headstone, the bevel marker set

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lower to the ground, and the flush marker. The headstones are ornamented in a number of shapes, with semi-circular tops, segmentally arched tops, and trefoil-arched tops. The older markers, dating from the latter part of the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century, are highly detailed with carved ornamentation. This includes the use of swags and open books within a recessed panel, and weeping willows flanked by obelisks.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Blenheim has a central passage, double-pile plan augmented by a kitchen wing. The symmetrical design found at the exterior of the original section of Blenheim is continued in the floor plan. The first floor is designed with a pair of rooms flanking each side of the center hall. The finishes and decorative details at the first floor provide an excellent montage of the house's evolution through different decorating trends. The straight-flight stair is located on the west interior wall of the passage. The stair carriage at the first

floor, railing, and treads are original to the house, but the carriage at the second floor has been re-built with the original treads and rail. The stair has square post balusters and well-worn wooden treads.

The basement level is an unfinished space with exposed brick walls and ceiling. The floorboards and joists for the first floor are visible at the basement level. Circular saw marks are evident on the 10-14" wide floorboards and a number of the square joists have been hand-hewn. A small section of the floorboards at the northeast end of the main elevation are narrower and are not original to the house. Steel beams have been installed below the first floor framing to provide additional structural support. The brickwork of the foundation is laid in a six-course American bond. The fact that the bonding of the foundation is drastically different from the exterior walls of the house and the report of a fire to Albert T. Willcoxon's house in March, 1855, may suggest that Blenheim was constructed upon the foundation of a previous building.ⁱⁱ

The dining room, located at the southeast corner, has been altered with the construction of a doorway leading to the 20th-century kitchen addition. The original fireplace, located along the east wall to the south of the modern doorway, has a wood mantel that, although not original, dates from the late 19th-century. The mantel is designed with squared pilasters that are adorned with semi-circular fluted balusters that terminate at a pair of scroll brackets that support the mantel shelf. The dining room is adorned with a baseboard, chair rail, and a modest picture molding. The base molding has an ovolo design and shoe molding. The chair rail is designed with a cyma reversa molding. The window trim,

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adorned with original stepped casings, has been altered with the addition of a late 19th-century back band. The window sashes do not appear to be original, but the original glass panes have been re-used. The wood flooring is original to the house and the walls have been wallpapered.

The front parlor found at the southwest corner has been altered with the introduction of late 19th-century moldings and trim. The mantel, although not original, is a late 19th-century wood mantel. The mantel is more modest in design than the mantel found in the dining room. The parlor mantel has a pair of squared pilasters that terminate just above the fireplace opening. The mantel shelf is rounded and supported by rounded bedmolding. This mantel design is repeated in the rear parlor. The mantel at the rear parlor has an additional ornamental feature, a block with a flower design, located in the center of the mantel's architrave. The baseboard in the front and rear parlors is similar in design to the dining room baseboard. The entranceway between the front and rear parlors is adorned with decorative trim designed with squared pilasters and a heavy entablature that is continued on the window trim of the rear parlor. The window sashes do not appear to be original, but the original glass panes have been re-used. The wood flooring in both the front and rear parlors are original.

The northeast room has undergone the most alterations with the installation of vinyl flooring, built-in bookshelves and the construction of an access to the late 20th century addition. The modern addition at the east side of the main block of the house includes the kitchen, bathroom, and mud/laundry room.

The 20th century kitchen wing and addition is located at the east end of the main block of the house. A second bathroom is located at the northwest corner of the kitchen wing and a small mudroom is located at the east end of the addition.

The second floor maintains the floor plan found at the first floor with four bedrooms and a modern bathroom within the northeast bedroom. The main bedroom, or the southwest room, is the most elaborate of the second floor rooms with decorative wood paneling along the west wall. The remaining walls are wallpapered with a modest baseboard. The entranceway between the north and south rooms is finished with a restrained stepped casing and back band molding. The northwest room is a small bedroom with a fireplace at the west wall. The mantel has a pair of squared pilasters that terminate just above the fireplace opening. The baseboard is an ogee casing with a rounded shoe molding. The southeast bedroom is small with a fireplace at the east wall and windows along the south wall. The mantel is more ornate than the one found at the southwest room. It is designed with squared pilasters, a pair of brackets supporting the mantel shelf and two raised panels in the mantel architrave. The base molding has an ogee design with a shoe molding. The wood flooring appears to be original and the walls have been

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wallpapered. The northeast room has been altered with the installation of a bathroom at the northeast corner and a closet at the southeast corner. There is no usable chimney breast opening in this room and the walls have been wallpapered.

The attic is accessible through the trap door that is the terminating point for the main stair. The attic has an unfinished wooden floor and wooden baseboard that was installed during the 20th century to protect the plaster walls. The plaster walls in the east and west rooms of the attic are adorned with writings from the Civil War-era and later. There are inscriptions of soldiers' names, regiments, drawings, and poems in both English and German. The plaster walls have been protected in a number of areas that have begun to fail due to water damage. Approximately sixteen Civil War military regiments have been identified by the soldiers on Blenheim's attic walls and are representative of Union units that had fought or had been stationed around Fairfax Court House during the war.

ⁱ Please Note: Building dates for Blenheim and its subsequent alterations are based on physical, documentary and photographic evidence.

ⁱⁱ *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, March 3, 1855, pg. 1

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Blenheim, historically known as Willcoxon Place (also spelled Wilcoxon, Wilcoxen, and Willcoxen) is one of the few remaining parcels of land that still represents the agricultural heritage that once dominated Fairfax County. Now located in the City of Fairfax, the twelve acres that currently comprise Blenheim are a remnant of the large landholdings that Captain Rezin Willcoxon had accumulated before his death in November 1855. The main house, cemetery, and two small outbuildings (shed with additions and cistern) are the only surviving resources of the farm complex that once included slave quarters, two tenant houses, dairy barn, horse barn, and other associated outbuildings. Built ca. 1860, the house at Blenheim is a good example of the vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style. Blenheim is also significant for its association with both the Confederate and Union soldiers who occupied Fairfax Court House throughout the Civil War. The farm played a critical role in supplying Confederate troops with provisions, serving as a prominent landmark for military forces and providing shelter and medical attention to Union soldiers travelling through the area. The Union soldiers who occupied the house adorned the plaster walls of the attic with their names, military units, drawings and poems, many of which survive today. The farm remained intact until the late 1950s when most of the land was sold off by the Willcoxon heirs and developed into housing subdivisions.

THE WILLCOXON FAMILY AND THE HISTORY OF BLENHEIM (WILLCOXON PLACE)

Willcoxon Place is located along the west side of Old Lee Highway in the City of Fairfax. Captain Rezin Samuel Willcoxon, the patriarch of the Willcoxon family, was born ca. 1771 to Josiah and Margaret Conn Willcoxon. Rezin, a veteran of the War of 1812, began to accumulate land in the Fairfax Court House vicinity during the early years of the 19th century. Among Rezin's property holdings was the Willcoxon Tavern (demolished) across from the courthouse, two lots in Fairfax Court House, and over 1,000 acres in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties.ⁱ A significant land and slave owner, Rezin was a prominent resident of Fairfax Court House. Rezin and his first wife, Elizabeth (Betsey) DeNeale were married in December 1805 and had nine children, Jane, William D. Josiah, John E., Ann Elizabeth, Margaret Conn, Catherine B., Albert T., and Virginia. Betsey had passed away at the age of 64 in 1845 and Rezin married Fanny Halley DeBell in 1851.ⁱⁱ

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In the 19th century, Fairfax County continued as a rural and agricultural society. By the 1840s, as a result of the Panic of 1837, the county as a whole was described as a desolate area. Where prosperous fields of tobacco, wheat, and corn had once supported thriving planters, there now were pine forests, abandoned fields, briars, and sedge grass.ⁱⁱⁱ By the late 1840s, new advanced agricultural techniques were being implemented throughout the county. Many of these new techniques were successful, but agricultural prosperity for the county was slow in coming.

The U.S. Agricultural Census of 1850 lists Rezin Willcoxon as the principal farmer for the Willcoxon family with 400 improved acres and an additional 800 unimproved acres of land. Rezin's livestock was estimated to be worth \$899.00 and his farm produced wheat, corn, Indian corn, and Irish potatoes.^{iv} Although Albert T. had begun to purchase land from his father in 1848 and took over a number of the farming operations, Rezin remained as head of the household according to the 1850 U.S. Census.^v In April, 1854, Albert T. purchased, "all that part of the tract upon which he now resides near Fairfax Court House, extending from the fence laid out in the poplar field [sic] from Accotink to the Ravensworth line and all this side of except the lot adjoining the poor house now fenced in and staked off..." for the sum of \$2,000.^{vi} It is at this juncture that Albert T. appears to have taken over the running of the family farm and established his residence at the main house.

A March 3, 1855 article in the *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser* reported that there was a fire on the Willcoxon property. "The dwelling house of Mr. Albert T. Willcoxon, about a mile north of Fairfax Court House, was destroyed by fire on Tuesday last...The loss is about \$1,500."^{vii} Documentary and physical evidence suggests that Willcoxon Place was built to replace the house that was destroyed by the 1855 fire. Tax records indicate an increase in value of the land from \$800.00 to \$1,800.00 between 1856 and 1861.^{viii} In January, 1860, Albert T. purchased an insurance policy from Southern Protection Insurance Company for \$2,000 to protect his house against loss or damage by fire.^{ix}

The craftsmanship of Willcoxon Place, now known as Blenheim, is unusual because the American bond brickwork was laid in five-, six-, seven-, eight- and nine- courses. The brick bonding for each of the exterior walls is not consistent with the foundation, which is constructed of six-course American bond on all four walls. This may suggest that the building was constructed upon a foundation that dates to the earlier building.^x The fact that the Willcoxon family were slave holders and the unsophisticated nature of the brickwork of Willcoxon Place, suggests that the masons used to construct the house could have been slave labor.

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The death of Rezin in November 1855 had placed the Willcoxon holdings in a state of disarray and confusion. Rezin's will stated that his estate was to be divided evenly among the children, except for Albert. The court had appointed three commissioners to review the extensive Willcoxon holdings and divide it among the heirs. Albert T. had already owned Willcoxon Place and a large tract of land at the time of Rezin's death. Albert T. served as the guardian for his sister, Jane Sweeney, and the remaining property addressed in Rezin's will was eventually split among Albert T.'s other siblings.^{xi}

Albert T. married Mary Hunter Eskridge on April 20, 1858 and had two children, Henry (Harry) Pope and Elizabeth (Bessie), who survived beyond childhood.^{xii} Albert's family occupied Willcoxon Place and successfully worked the farm prior to the Civil War. The Willcoxon family were staunch secession supporters and had remained in the house through at least the first half of 1862. Willcoxon Place was a well-known property to both Union and Confederate soldiers because of its close proximity to Fairfax Court House and was often listed on military maps during the Civil War.^{xiii} Albert and his brother Josiah supported the Confederate cause by selling rebel soldiers large quantities of supplies. Throughout 1861 and the early half of 1862, Albert sold beef, hay, blacksmith supplies, horses and pork to the Confederate Army.^{xiv} The last official transaction between Albert Willcoxon and the Confederate Army occurred in February 1862. By October of 1862, Willcoxon Place had become a Reserve Hospital for the 11th Army Corps.^{xv}

It was about this time that the lush landscape of the Fairfax Court House area had become depleted and, "many of the orchard trees been cut down; have their bark gnawed by famished horses. The fields know no tillage by the pressure of the soldiers foot or the hoof of the cavalry horse."^{xvi} Corporal Adam Muenzenberger, a member of Company C, 26th Wisconsin Infantry, described the Fairfax Court House area to his wife in a letter dated October 1862. "The land here looks desolate. All the houses that are not in ruins are unoccupied...Everything is trodden down, all the fences are burned, every fruit tree have been chopped down and burned."^{xvii} An 1862 article by *The Daily Wisconsin* reported, "Two years ago all was peace and established prosperity. Comfortable farm-houses sheltered happy inmates. Along the roads were smiling fields join the husbandman's care, and gardens and orchards dotted the wayside." The prosperous times that this reporter was writing about had long passed.

Although it is unclear when the family left Willcoxon Place, on November 12, 1862, Mary Willcoxon was granted a pass by the 1st Brigade Headquarters of the Union Army to travel from Aldie to Middleburg, Virginia.^{xviii} The deterioration of the situation at Willcoxon Place and around Fairfax Court House might have been the catalyst that convinced the members of the family, if not the entire family, to temporarily abandon their home.^{xix} Mary's family was from Leesburg in Loudoun County and it is feasible that the family stayed there until the end of the Civil War.

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Albert passed away in 1889 and his land, which included Willcoxon Place and approximately 365 acres, was split between Henry (Harry) P. and Elizabeth (Bessie). "I give to my son Henry, all my land not heretofore conveyed to him lying north of the road leading to Fairfax Court House."^{xx} Under H. P.'s tutelage, the Willcoxon farm became an important landmark on the Fairfax landscape and the agricultural community. From 1870 to 1900, local farmers engaged in dairy production, stock and poultry farming, flour milling, fruit and vegetable cultivation, and the growing of flowers. Fairfax's agricultural status was considered to be quite promising at the turn of the 20th-century and dairying was one of the most important industries in the county.^{xxi} H.P. Willcoxon ran one of the most successful dairies in all of Fairfax County. "There are other things that bring Fairfax County favorably to the front as one takes a casual retrospect, the dairies managed by Harry Willcoxon...has brought Fairfax milk into favorable notice in city markets, our butter always sought after."^{xxii} It is at this time, in a 1903 family obituary, that the earliest documented use of the name 'Blenheim' for Willcoxon Place was recorded.^{xxiii} Officially, the property continued to be described as 'Willcoxon Place' in deed records throughout the 20th century, including the 1999 deed between the City of Fairfax, Virginia, and the Scott family. Locally, the house has become known as 'Blenheim'.

By the 1930s, the farm was being run by a tenant farmer.^{xxiv} H.P. Willcoxon moved to his other farm in Centreville and sold the Blenheim parcel to his niece Marguerite V. Duras in 1939.^{xxv} H.P. passed away at his Centreville home three years later. Farm operations continued at the Willcoxon farm through the 1950s, but increasing suburbanization pressure experienced throughout the City of Fairfax eventually overtook Willcoxon Place. In 1950, an insurance survey listed the farm having two tenant houses, the main house, a privy, chicken house, pump house, machinery shed and work shop, dairy barn and house, calf house, granary, corn crib, house barn, a second machinery and hay shop, a cow shed and a hog shed.^{xxvi} The Willcoxon heirs began to sell off large parcels of the farm for development in 1953.^{xxvii} At the close of the 1950s, the original landholdings around Blenheim had been reduced to twelve acres. Today, the Blenheim property consists of the main house, the machinery shed and workshop, pump house, and the cemetery.

THE CIVIL WAR AND FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE

Fairfax Court House, also known as the town of Providence, was a vital and strategic location for the defense of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War. Fairfax Court House was the county seat for Fairfax County and its location along the Little River Turnpike made the town easily accessible from most points in Northern Virginia. On April 17, 1861, "The Ordinance of Secession" was adopted by the Virginia Convention and was overwhelmingly supported by the Fairfax Court House residents. The town's close proximity to the Union capital and its strong

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Confederate sympathies placed the residents of Fairfax Court House in a very difficult position throughout the war. The Willcoxon family, whose farm was situated along the northeast edge of town, were staunch secessionists and Confederate sympathizers. Their farm's prominent position at the edge of Fairfax Court House placed their land in the center of wartime activity around the strategically located town. A secessionist town at the start of the Civil War, Fairfax Court House was the scene of a number of early skirmishes to control the community.

The Confederate force stationed within Fairfax Court House on May 31, 1861 was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Ewell and comprised of Captain Thornton's cavalry company, Captain Green's cavalry company and Captain Marr's rifle company. The entire Confederate force totaled no more than three hundred men and was poorly equipped.^{xxviii} Lieutenant Tompkins, commander of Company B of the Second U.S. Cavalry, and Lieutenant Gordan, Second Dragoons, advanced their troops toward Fairfax Court House on the early morning of June 1, 1861. Their advance along Fairfax Court House-Falls Church Road (now known as Route 237 and runs north to south along the east side of Fairfax) had not been detected by Confederate forces and the Union troops were able to capture the picket guards before advancing into Fairfax Court House. One of the picket guards escaped and alerted the Confederates of the coming Union troops, who came charging into town and a volley of shots were fired between the troops. The Confederate troops were able to repel the Union soldiers during the night and retain occupation of Fairfax Court House. During the skirmish, Captain Marr was killed and had the unfortunate distinction of being the first Confederate officer to die in the Civil War.^{xxix}

By July 1861, Brigadier General Irwin McDowell strategically maneuvered the Second, Third and Fifth Divisions around Fairfax Court House to prepare for an offensive against the Confederate position in town. McDowell stated in General Orders No. 17 that, "The enemy is represented to be in force at...Fairfax Court-House...and at intermediate places. He has been obstructing, as far as possible, the roads leading to Fairfax Court-House, and is believed on several of these to have thrown up breastworks and planted cannon."^{xxx} On July 17, 1861, McDowell reported to Lieutenant Colonel E.D. Townsend that Union forces had successfully occupied Fairfax Court House and had driven the enemy towards Centreville and Manassas. Colonel J.B. Kershaw of the Second South Carolina Infantry had reported to Brigadier General M.L. Bonham the Confederate's retreat from Fairfax Court House. "In accordance with your [Bonham's] orders I had prepared my command to cover the movement of the advance forces from Fairfax Court House to Bull Run....Anxious for the safety of my picket, who had not yet returned, the enemy being now far in the rear of the position where the pickets had been posted [several miles near Flint Hill/ Oakton to the north of Willcoxon Place], I went forward with Captain Hoke's company and Captain Thett's to the hill near Wilcoxson's, where I awaited their arrival."^{xxxi} Willcoxon's farm was a locally prominent property and its proximity to Fairfax Court

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House was noted on a number of military maps. Willcoxon Place's location off of Fairfax Court House-Falls Church Road placed it in an ideal position to witness the constant moving of troops throughout the area. It has been suggested by local historians that at one time Willcoxon Place served as a temporary headquarters for the Union.^{xxxii} By the end of 1861, Union troops had control of Fairfax Court House and the Courthouse served as the Headquarters for the Army of the Potomac for a number of campaigns.

During 1862-1863, the geographic location of Fairfax Court House and the area around the town served as the center for the Army of the Potomac's Northern Virginia campaigns. This area in Northern Virginia was a constant battlefield between the Union and Confederate troops to make advancements in position and to defend Washington, D.C. "Each of the many commands which occupied the town during the war added to the work of devastation commenced in 1861..Its best homes were burned, the churches were converted into hospitals, and then into stables..^{xxxiii} There were a number of skirmishes along the Little River Turnpike, the Fairfax Court House-Falls Church Road (approximately along present day Old Lee Highway and Route 29/Lee Highway), and the area between Centreville and Fairfax Court House. In March 1863, Captain John Mosby conducted a successful raid against the Union soldiers at Fairfax Court House. In reporting to Major General J.E.B. Stuart, Mosby revealed that Colonel Wyndham's assistant adjutant general and aide-de-camp were prisoners along with General Stoughton, his staff, escort, and the guards. "We also brought off 58 horses, most of them being very fine, belonging to officers; also a considerable number of arms."^{xxxiv} Mosby's successful raid was quite an embarrassment to the Union Army and while he struck fear in the heart of the Union soldiers, his heroic status to the Confederates was well known throughout Fairfax Court House.^{xxxv}

By the first half of 1862, the Willcoxon Place was no longer a safe haven for Confederate troops to conduct business. The Confederate sympathies of the Willcoxon family was well-known and evident by their supplying of Confederate troops in 1861-1862. Although control of Fairfax Court House continually changed between the Confederate and Union forces, by March 1863, it was a Union stronghold. As the war progressed, the Fairfax Court House area was becoming dangerous for secessionists. Throughout the county, "men suspected of Confederate sympathies were arrested and committed to prison."^{xxxvi} Circumstantial evidence suggests that Albert or members of his family had abandoned Willcoxon Place by November 1862.^{xxxvii}

BLENHEIM (WILLCOXON PLACE) AND UNION SOLDIERS

Willcoxon Place's prominent location and its eventual abandonment by the Willcoxon family led to the house being fully occupied by Union soldiers. Its eventual use as a hospital for Union soldiers is supported by army records and the extensive writings found on the attic walls. The

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writing of names in abandoned homes by soldiers was a common practice during the Civil War. Civil War-era writings have been preserved at the Stone House at Manassas, Massaponax Church in Virginia, caves in the Shenandoah Valley, a plantation house in Secessionville, South Carolina, a church in Bunker Hill, West Virginia and a number of houses in Virginia.^{xxxviii} These writings are limited to soldiers' names and dates. The writings on the attic wall at Willcoxon Place include over ninety names, units, dates, poems, and artistic drawings. At least fifteen different military regiments are represented on the walls, including the 26th Wisconsin Infantry, 83rd Pennsylvania Infantry, 58th New York Infantry, 136th New York Infantry, and the 1st Michigan Cavalry. The earliest dated writings deciphered on the wall date to March 1862 and extend through the mid-20th century.

On December 6, 1862, Private Morris H. Coats was a temporary occupant of Willcoxon Place and signed his name on the attic walls. A soldier in the 136th New York Infantry, Private Coats was suffering from dysentery and was listed in the muster rolls during this time as "Absent, sick in hospital."^{xxxix} A December 16, 1877 Surgeon General's Report states that, "Morris H. Coats, Co. A, 136th NY Vols., was admitted to Reserve hospital, 11th Army Corp, Fairfax CH, Va. Nov 3/62 with Dysentery..."^{xl} Coats' pension deposition on February 17, 1888 stated that he was "hospitalized at the Brick House Hospital near Fairfax CH with Typhoid Fever."^{xli} Coats' claim was supported by the deposition given by James Howard of Company K of the 136th NY, "I saw him at what was called 'Brick Hospital' at Fairfax, VA."^{xlii} Private Coats and the hospital register for the Reserve Hospital for the 11th Army Corps, Fairfax Court House, Virginia substantiates previous references that Willcoxon Place was temporarily used as a hospital during the Civil War.

As many as 1800 soldiers between October 1862 and January 1863 were registered in the records of the Reserve Hospital, 11th Army Corps. A majority of the ailments attributed to the soldiers' hospitalization was for communicable diseases rather than combat injuries. Willcoxon Place was one of numerous houses in the area used as a hospital and it is possible that the farm might have been (the hospital extended).^{xliii}

Private Henry Van Eweyk, a soldier in Company A of the 26th Wisconsin Infantry, signed his signature on the walls at Willcoxon Place on October 29, 1862. Private Van Eweyk, a sick soldier, deserted the Union army soon after he arrived at Willcoxon Place. He rejoined his regiment five months later at Stafford Court House and was promoted to corporal five months later. Private Van Eweyk was one of thirty-six men wounded at the Battle of Peach Tree Creek, Georgia in July 1864. His commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick C. Winkler wrote, "Upon the whole, our loss is comparatively light; most of the wounds are light, and our success was great."^{xliv}

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Lewis Walter, a captain from Company G of the 73rd Pennsylvania Infantry, was an occupant at Willcoxon Place during his regiment's stay in the Fairfax Court House area in March 1862. Wounded at the Second Battle of Manassas on August 30, 1862, Captain Walter was soon discharged and returned to Pennsylvania. An immigrant from Wurttemberg, Germany, Walter was a stonecutter prior to his service in the Civil War.^{xlv}

Private Carl (Charles) Schlingermann of the 58th New York Infantry was also an occupant at Willcoxon Place during the spring of 1862. There was no date along with his signature and it is unclear when he had arrived at Willcoxon Place. Schlingermann's unit served under General Pope's Army of Virginia and participated in the battle at Second Manassas where he sustained serious injuries on August 30th. He finally succumbed to his wounds on September 16, 1862 in Washington, D.C.^{xlvi}

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- ⁱ Fairfax County Circuit Court Case, Liber Z 3, pg. 358-369. (January 29, 1858).
- ⁱⁱ *Blenheim Vertical File*, Fairfax County Public Library, Virginia Room.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Netherton, Nan, et al., *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History*. p. 251
- ^{iv} *1850 US Agricultural Census, Fairfax County, Virginia*, pg. 207-208.
- ^v *1850 US Federal Census, Fairfax County, Virginia*, (page not listed).
- ^{vi} Fairfax County Deed Book X 3, pg. 418-419. (April 20, 1854)
- ^{vii} *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, March 3, 1855, pg. 1.
- ^{viii} *Blenheim Vertical File*, Fairfax County Public Library, Virginia Room
- ^{ix} *Southern Protection Insurance Company, Policy No. 9236, January 27, 1860*, Private Collection, Virginia.
- ^x Please Note: The *Phase I Archaeological Investigation of the 12 Acre Blenheim Property, City of Fairfax, Virginia*, conducted in December, 1999 by Thunderbird Archeological Associates, INC., did not uncover any physical evidence to support the occurrence of a fire. "No evidence of this in the form of burned soils or large quantities of burned artifacts was found..." pg. 33.
- ^{xi} Fairfax County Court Case Z 3, page. 358. (November, 1856 & January, 1858)
- ^{xii} *Death of Mrs. Mary E. Willcoxon*, *Fairfax Herald*, November 27, 1903.
- ^{xiii} *Survey for Military Defenses- Map of Northeast Virginia and Vicinity of Washington*, Division Headquarters of General Irwin McDowell, January 1, 1862.
- ^{xiv} *Confederate (States) Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, 1861-1862*.
- ^{xv} *Hospital Register #805 for the Reserve Hospital, 11th Army Corps, Fairfax Court House, Virginia*, October-November, 1862, National Archives.
- ^{xvi} "A Visit to Sigel's Corps," *The Daily Wisconsin*, October 30, 1862.
- ^{xvii} *Adam Muenzenberger Letters*, <http://www.agro.agri.umn.edu/~lemedg/wisc26>
- ^{xviii} *Scott Estate-Willcoxon Family Papers 1862*, Private Collection, Virginia.
- ^{xix} The research of family papers and other documentary evidence are currently being investigated. At this time, it is unclear if the entire family had left Willcoxon Place or if some occupants, including Albert T. had remained home. Evidence thus far suggests that the family probably left the house for at least a short period of time.
- ^{xx} Fairfax County Will Book F-2, p.88.
- ^{xxi} The County Board of Supervisors, *Industrial and Historical Sketch of Fairfax County Virginia*, pg. 30.
- ^{xxii} *Fairfax*, *Fairfax Herald*, January 1, 1904.
- ^{xxiii} *Mary Eskridge Willcoxon Obituary*, *Fairfax Herald*, November 27, 1903.
- ^{xxiv} *Good Citizen Dies*, *Fairfax Herald*, March 12, 1937.

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^{xxv} Fairfax County Deed Book J 13, pg. 436.

^{xxvi} Boston Insurance Company, "Fire Insurance Survey for Marguerite Duras-West Side of Old Lee Highway," October 26, 1950.

^{xxvii} Fairfax County Deed 1102, page 524.

^{xxviii} *Letter from M.L. Bonham, Brig. Gen., C.S.A., Commanding First Brigade, Dept. of Alexandria to Col. R.S. Garnett, Adjunct-General Va. Forces, June 2, 1861. War of the Rebellion-Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. 2, 1880.*

^{xxix} *Letter from R.S. Ewell, Lieut.-Col. Virginia Forces, Commanding to Col. Thomas Jordan, Assistant Adjutant-General Virginia Forces, June 1, 1861. War of the Rebellion-Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume 2, 1880.*

^{xxx} *General Orders No. 17 from Brigadier General Irvin McDowell, USA, July 16, 1861. War of the Rebellion-Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume 2, 1880.*

^{xxxi} *Letter from Colonel J. B. Kershaw, Second South Carolina Infantry to Brigadier General M. L. Bonham, July 26, 1861. War of the Rebellion-Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume 2, 1880.*

^{xxxii} Local historian, Andrea Loewenwarter, and the research team working with the *Citizen Coalition for the Preservation of Blenheim*, continue to conduct extensive research in support of this hypothesis. A cavalry road located between Blenheim and Annandale suggests that military communications could have originated from officers located at Blenheim. Although his signature was not date, Private Cable was a cavalry soldier in the Fairfax Court House area during the Fall of 1861.

^{xxxiii} Gardner, *Photographic and Sketchbook of the War*, Fairfax Court House page.

^{xxxiv} *Letter from Captain John Mosby to Major General J.E.B. Stuart, March 11, 1863. War of the Rebellion-Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume 25, 1880.*

^{xxxv} Netherton, pg. 358-359.

^{xxxvi} Netherton, pg. 329.

^{xxxvii} Evidence suggesting the family might have vacated the house includes the November 12, 1862 pass issued by the 1st Brigade Headquarters of the Union Army to travel from Aldie to Middleburg, Virginia. ^{xxxviii} The deterioration of the situation at Willcoxon Place and around Fairfax Court House might have been the catalyst that convinced the family to temporarily abandon their home. ^{xxxviii} The house's use as a hospital by Union soldiers would suggest that the secessionist family would leave under fear of persecution.

^{xxxviii} *Blenheim Feasibility Study; Blenheim Historic Finding Report, pg. 7 (10/1999)*

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^{xxxix} *Hospital Register #353 for the Reserve Hospital, 11th Army Corps, Fairfax Court House, Virginia, (Patient #221), November 3, 1862- December 28, 1862.*

^{xi} *Pension File for Private Morris H. Coats-Surgeon General's Report, December 16, 1877, National Archives-RG NM-17.*

^{xli} *Pension File for Private Morris H. Coats-Pension Deposition, February 17, 1888, National Archives-RG NM-17. *Please Note: Private Coats stated during his deposition that he had been hospitalized at only one hospital during his sickness. His signature and date on the attic walls corresponds with the time of his sickness.*

^{xlvi} *Pension File for Private Morris H. Coats-Pension Deposition, February 18, 1888, National Archives-RG NM-17.*

^{xlvi} Please note: A number of unmarked graves are located on the Blenheim property. It is possible that these graves could be the final resting-place for a number of Civil War soldiers or slaves. Oral history reveals the final resting-place of the soldiers. Beginning in July, 2000, a cemetery survey will be the first step conducted in a full investigation of the unmarked graves.

^{xlii} Kimbrell, Fred T. Jr, *The 33rd Mississippi Infantry Regiment at the Battle of Peach Tree Creek*, 'Letter between Lieutenant Colonel Frederick C. Winkler, 26th Wisconsin Infantry and his wife, July 21, 1864.' <http://home.att.net/~captnerdo/peachtre.htm>

^{xlii} *Service and Pension File Lewis Walter*, National Archives-RG NM-17.

^{xlii} This information was obtained through *The American Civil War Homepage*, <http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war> . This web site provides direct links to a number of different regiments.

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All photographs are of:

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City of Fairfax, Virginia
VDHR File Number: 151-5003
EHT Tracerries, Inc., photographer

All negatives are stored with the Department of Historic Resources collection at the Virginia State Library and Archives.

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: south elevation, main house; view
looking north
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 1 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: west elevation, main house; view
looking southeast
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 3 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: east elevation, main house; view
looking northwest
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 5 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: main entrance, view
looking south
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 7 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: brickwork,
south elevation, looking north
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 2 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: north elevation,
main house, looking southeast
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 4 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: cemetery and
tombstones, looking east
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 6 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: double parlors,
first floor, looking west
NEG. NO.: 18335
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Blenheim, City of Fairfax, Virginia

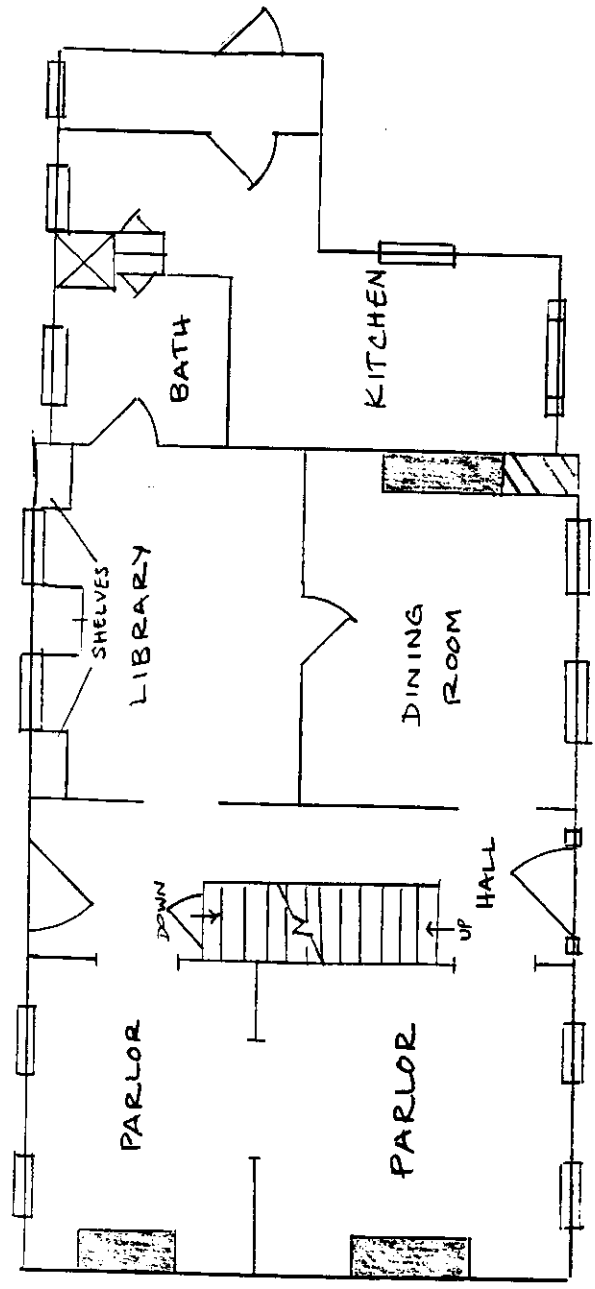
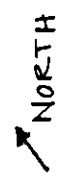
Section number Photo **Page** 23

DATE: January, 2000
VIEW OF: attic, view
looking east
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 9 of 10

DATE: January, 2000
DETAIL OF: signatures at
the attic walls, looking north
NEG. NO.: 18335
PHOTO 10 of 10

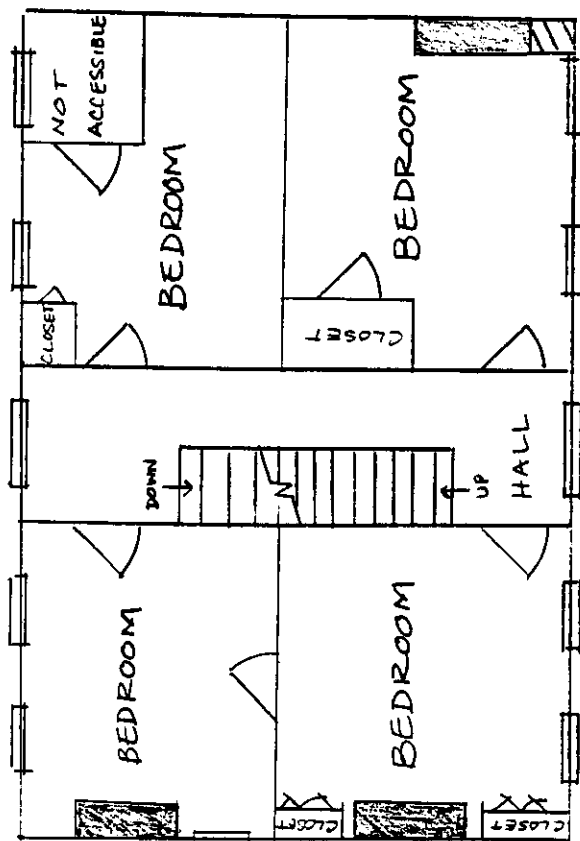
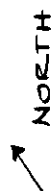
BLENHEIM

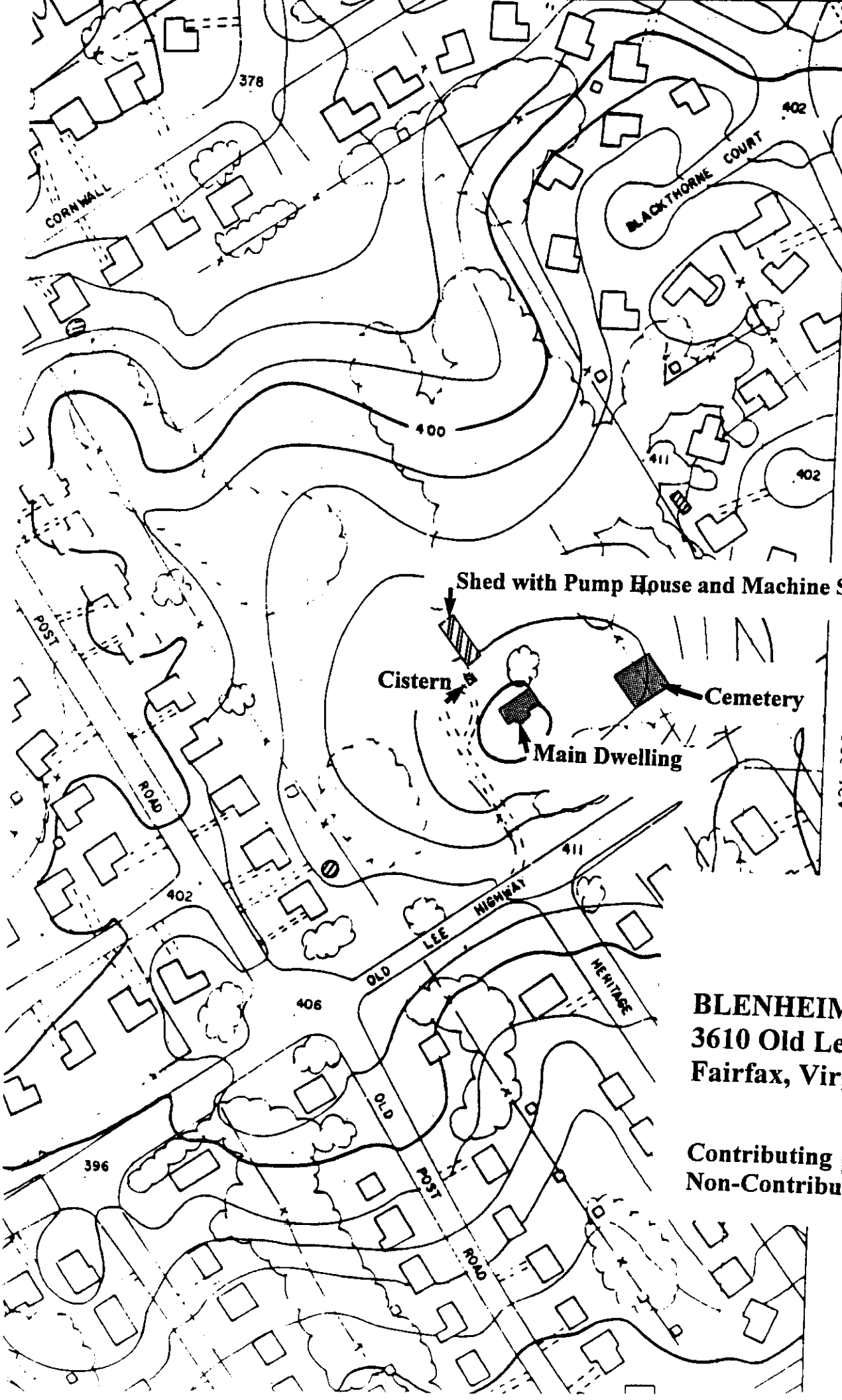
FIRST FLOOR
NOT TO SCALE



BLenheim

SECOND FLOOR
NOT TO SCALE





Shed with Pump House and Machine Shed



Cistern

Main Dwelling

Cemetery



BLenheim (115-5003)
3610 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia

Contributing 
Non-Contributing 

FAIRFAX QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

'01 17°30" '02 '03 3 607 500 METERS 77°15' 38°52'30"



7101

151-5003

Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Hwy

1.18 301180 4303220
2.18 301020 4303420
3.18 301100 4303350
2 132 500 4.18 301010 4303120
METERS

FAIRFAX
CITY